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8 July 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR: Special Assistant Vietnamese Affairs

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ATTENTION: [REDACTED]

THROUGH: Chief, Imagery Analysis Division, CIA

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FROM: [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: "Van" Concept for Field Processing and Exploitation Capability

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1. In a meeting in your office on 29 June 1966 we discussed [REDACTED] proposal for a Target Center in Southeast Asia. During the course of the discussion I mentioned the possibility of thinking in terms of a "van" approach instead of a permanent or fixed installation for such a Target Center.

2. During this past week a considerable effort has been spent in obtaining information sufficient to give you a better idea of the "van" concept. The information which follows represents not only the views of IAD and NPIC officers, but also the views of [REDACTED] representatives who were called in to report on their latest activity in providing the military with a "van" housed PI processing/exploitation facility.

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3. Basically, the "van" concept is based on a system of air relocatable vans or shelters - designed, engineered and fully equipped to provide a photo processing and exploitation capability in forward field areas. Several such systems are operational and in use by the military. The air relocatable aspect refers to the air transportability of the vans (approx. 22 x 8 x 8 feet) in increments of one, two or three - depending on the cargo space and weight limitations of the C-124, C-130 or C-133 aircraft.

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A possible drawback in [REDACTED] proposal is the lack of mobility and recoverability of the planned for assets; redeployment of aircraft and personnel in place would pose only minor problems, but not so in the case of a processing/exploitation facility. If the Agency was to acquire a photo processing/exploitation capability based on an air relocatable system it would at once possess the means to respond to the short range needs of DDP/FE in Laos and to a lesser extent the long range needs of the Agency in having its own reconnaissance/exploitation capability.

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4. Given the impetus of [] priority and assigning an NPIC representative as PROJECT OFFICER (no time for committee meetings), the Agency could probably have operational in the field a van-housed PI exploitation unit within 60 to 90 days and a van-housed photo processing lab within 90 to 120 days. The matter of the PROJECT OFFICER is most important; if the Agency wants results within 60 to 90 days the designation of an NPIC individual - well qualified to monitor all the contract work and completely knowledgeable of the problem - is essential. There is no R&D involved and all of the equipment is readily available.

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5. Preliminary study on our part indicates a minimum photo processing/exploitation capability could be realized for a sum of less than [] This minimum facility would be comprised of:

- 5 Processing/Printing/Storage Vans
- 2 Exploitation Vans
- 1 Admin/Maintenance Van

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[] Personnel requirements for such a facility would call for photo interpreters and approximately [] photo lab personnel. As a minimum facility it would have the capability of handling the inputs from any reasonable reconnaissance program - such as processing and printing an input of 2,000 feet at any given time. And this minimum facility would be organized so heavy increases in film inputs - occasioned by higher frequency of missions or inputs from [] - would be met by the simple expedient of adding one or two more vans.

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6. Briefly then, the van concept offers an air relocatable system which is global, recoverable and indeed operational. For less than [] the Agency could have a processing/exploitation asset capable of world-wide service in crisis areas where immediate information is required from Agency or military obtained reconnaissance inputs.

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7. We are prepared to discuss with you at any time the "van" concept in greater depth.

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